

Message Text

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40

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /078 W

----- 105118

O R 070705Z FEB 76 CORRECTED FOR MCN

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4536

INFO USEC BRUSSELS 1963

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXENBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: MADRID STRIKE WAVE ENDS

REF: MADRID 0488

SUMMARY: MADRID STRIKE WAVE APPEARS HAVE ENDED, ALTHOUGH LABOR

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AGITATION IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE

COUNTRY. END SUMMARY

1. FOUR WEEK OLD MADRID STRIKE WAVE, WHICH REACHED MAXIMUM INTENSITY IN MID-JANUARY AND HAS BEEN GRADUALLY SUBSIDING SINCE, HAS PRETTY MUCH WOUND DOWN WITH RETURN TO WORK THIS WEEK OF MOST REMAINING STRIKERS. SOME STRIKE ACTIVITY IS CONTINUING IN BARCELONA AREA, IN BASQUE PROVINCES, AND IN ASTURIAS, BUT THAT ALSO APPEARS BE GRADUALLY SUBSIDING. CONSIDERABLE STRIKE ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, IS STILL IN PROGRESS IN VALLADOLID, WHERE SOME 30,000 METAL AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, INCLUDING THE 16,000 WORKERS AT THE RENAULT AUTO-MOBILE PLANT, HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE FOR OVER A WEEK (RENAULT WORKERS MAY GO BACK TO WORK TODAY).

2. WORKERS FOR SOME OF THE LARGE AMERICAN MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES AFFECTED BY RECENT MADRID STRIKE WAVE WERE AMONG LAST GROUPS TO RETURN. THUS 24,000 WORKERS AT STANDARD ELECTRICA (AN ITT AFFILIATE) RETURNED LAST WEEK, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN SEVERAL WORK SLOWDOWNS SINCE THEIR RETURN. CHRYSLER'S WORKERS RETURNED TO WORK JAN 30, AFTER COMPANY, WHICH ONLY A WEEK EARLIER HAD FIRED 84 WORKERS WHO WERE RINGLEADERS IN THE STRIKE, SUDDENLY CHANGED ITS HITHERTO HARD LINE STANCE AND AGREED TO TAKE BACK MOST OF 84 FIRED IN RETURN FOR A COMMITMENT THAT PLANT'S 12,000 WORKERS WOULD RETURN TO WORK. LAST WORKERS IN VOLATILE MADRID METTALURGICAL SECTOR TO RETURN TO WORK, ON FEB 5, WERE 2,000 WORKERS AT JOHN DEERE TRACTOR FACTORY, WHERE COMPANY ALSO AGREED TO TAKE BACK 14 WORKERS FIRED IN EXCHANGE FOR A RETURN TO WORK BY STRIKERS.

3. OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS MADRID CONSTRUCTION AND BANK WORKERS HAVE ALSO NEARLY RETURNED TO NORMAL. MANY UNDERLYING ISSUES REMAIN IN ARBITRATION OR UNRESOLVED AND COULD PROMPT FURTHER PROBLEMS. ADDITIONALLY ONE NEW SECTOR, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, HAS BECOME INVOLVED IN STRIKES IN MADRID, LARGELY OVER PROFESSIONAL ISSUES.

4. CONCLUSIONS: (A) STRIKE WAVE WAS FAIRLY GENERALIZED IN CERTAIN SECTORS (I.E., CONSTRUCTION AND METTALURGICAL) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON PEAK DAYS, BUT IT FAILED COMPLETELY TO BECOME MADRID POLITICAL GENERAL STRIKE WHICH SOME CLANDESTINE GROUPS HAD CALLED FOR; (B) UNDERLYING CAUSE OF NEARLY EVERY STRIKE WAS ECONOMIC, DESPITE FREQUENT SUBSEQUENT INJECTION OF POLITICAL ISSUES; (C) EVERY CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUP PARTICIPATED TO SOME DEGREE IN STRIKE WAVE, BUT NO ONE GROUP WAS DOMINANT, LEAST OF ALL THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED, POLITICS FIRST, SPANISH WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC); (D) MOST IMPORTANT WAS

SPONTANEOUS NATURE OF MANY STRIKES, AND GOODLY NUMBER OF LEADERS WERE NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY CLANDESTINE GROUP; (E) WORKERS ALSO EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE TACTICAL SOPHISTICATION; (F) ATTEMPTS TO CREATE AN OVERALL STRIKE COORDINATING COMMITTEE INCLUDING SWC, UGT (SOCIALIST), AND USO (SOCIAL CHRISTIAN) RESULTED IN FAILURE; (G) STRIKE WAVE WITNESSED A SPLIT IN SWC BETWEEN DOMINANT SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) ELEMENT, REPORTEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSUADING WORKERS TO RETURN TO WORK IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES, AND MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS (ORT, PDT, AND MCE), WHICH WANTED TO PROLONG STRIKES INDEFINITELY; (H) GOVT DISPLAYED A FAIRLY RESTRAINED AND DISCRIMINATING ATTITUDE, LETTING MOST RUN THEIR COURSE AND ONLY INTERVENING WITH MILITARIZATION OR THREAT OF MILITARIZATION IN STRIKES INVOLVING PUBLIC UTILITIES OR GOVT EMPLOYEES; (I) STRIKE WAVE PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW SHOP STEWARDS OF GOVT-CONTROLLED SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO) ELECTED LAST JUNE TO DEMONSTRATE MILITANCE; (J) EVEN SOME HIGH LEVEL FALANGIST SSO LEADERS JOINED STRIKE BANDWAGON, UNDER PRESSURE FROM WORKERS; (K) MANY COMPANIES ADOPTED INITIAL HARD LINE POSTURES TOWARDS STRIKING WORKERS, BUT THEIR ATTITUDE CHANGED WHEN THEY FOUND THEMSELVES UNDER PRESSURE FROM NEW GOVT AND SYNDICAL MINISTER TO STOP FIRINGS AND OTHER ARBITRARY ACTIONS AND WHEN THEY DISCOVERED THEY CAN NO LONGER, AS IN PAST, DEPEND ON GOVT TO INTERVENE IN STRIKES WITH POLICE AT COMPANY REQUEST; (L) VARIOUS COMPANIES FINALLY REACHED WAGE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS FAR IN EXCESS OF GOVT-DECREE WAGE LIMITATION INCREASE GUIDELINES, WHICH GENERALLY LIMIT WAGE INCREASES TO INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING (IN ONE CASE 38 PERCENT); (M) FOR FIRST TIME SUBSTANTIAL THOUGH LIMITED STRIKE FUNDS, MOSTLY COLLECTED AMONG WORKERS AND NEIGHBORS (ALTHOUGH SOME WERE ALSO CHanneled FROM INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE UNION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS IMF), WERE OBTAINED; (O) ONE OF PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR END OF STRIKE WAVE WAS GENERAL WORKER FATIGUE AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS; AND (P) AT NO TIME DID STRIKE ACTIVITY DISRUPT NORMAL MADRID LIFE.

5. DESPITE END OF RECENT MADRID STRIKE WAVE, LABOR UNREST, AND AGITATION ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE IN OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID00955
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760047-1064
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760272/aaaackxi.tel
Line Count: 163
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 488
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <02 JUN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MADRID STRIKE WAVE ENDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006